



ACROSS MY DESK

By Brian Butko, Editor

The Beechwood Farms Connection

We've received some intriguing letters regarding the summer 2011 issue of *Western Pennsylvania History*. Next time we'll learn more about the 1931 Lincoln Highway dedication and its connection to Rock Springs Park. This issue we have an interesting follow-up to our cover story on Mary Flinn Lawrence.

A photo on page 27 mentioned Beechwood Farms, which is now a nature reserve in the Borough of Fox Chapel. Beechwood's 134 acres contain more than five miles of public walking trails. It is also the headquarters for the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, which manages the sanctuary for the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

The property was named in 1903 by state senator William Flinn, who, after retiring from politics, bought 350 acres astride Dorseyville Road. He built a summer residence and pursued farming, from roses and rabbits to poultry and cattle. Mary was his daughter; in a photo on page 27, she is at Beechwood Farms with "Gifford Pinchot, and two unknown men." We now know one of those men thanks to reader Douglas Campbell, who lives nearby. Below are portions of our correspondence.

The gentleman on the far left with the white mustache is my great-grandfather Irvin King Campbell, a three-time county commissioner of Allegheny County.

Born in Beaver County in 1843, I.K. (as he was known) enlisted in the Union Army in 1861. He was captured in August 1864 at the battle of the Weldon Railroad in Virginia, and was held as a POW at Salisbury Prison in North Carolina until February 1865. In March of that year he was honorably discharged, but with a stomach so shrunken he could never eat a full meal again.

I.K. was associated with both the Oliver Iron and Steel Company and the Colonial Steel Company. He was married to Frances E. Alexander and they had 10 children, 7 of whom lived to maturity. They raised their family in the 6500 block of Darlington Ave. in Squirrel Hill. I.K. died in Aspinwall in 1928, at age 85.

As my wife Shelley observed, "sic transit gloria mundi," yet, thanks to you, the matter of the "unknown man" has caused I.K.'s great-great grandchildren to take an interest in him, and that is glorious.

I have two great photos of I.K.: one from when he enlisted, the other of him in Florida in a white outfit near the end of his life, from which I recognized his face in your photo.

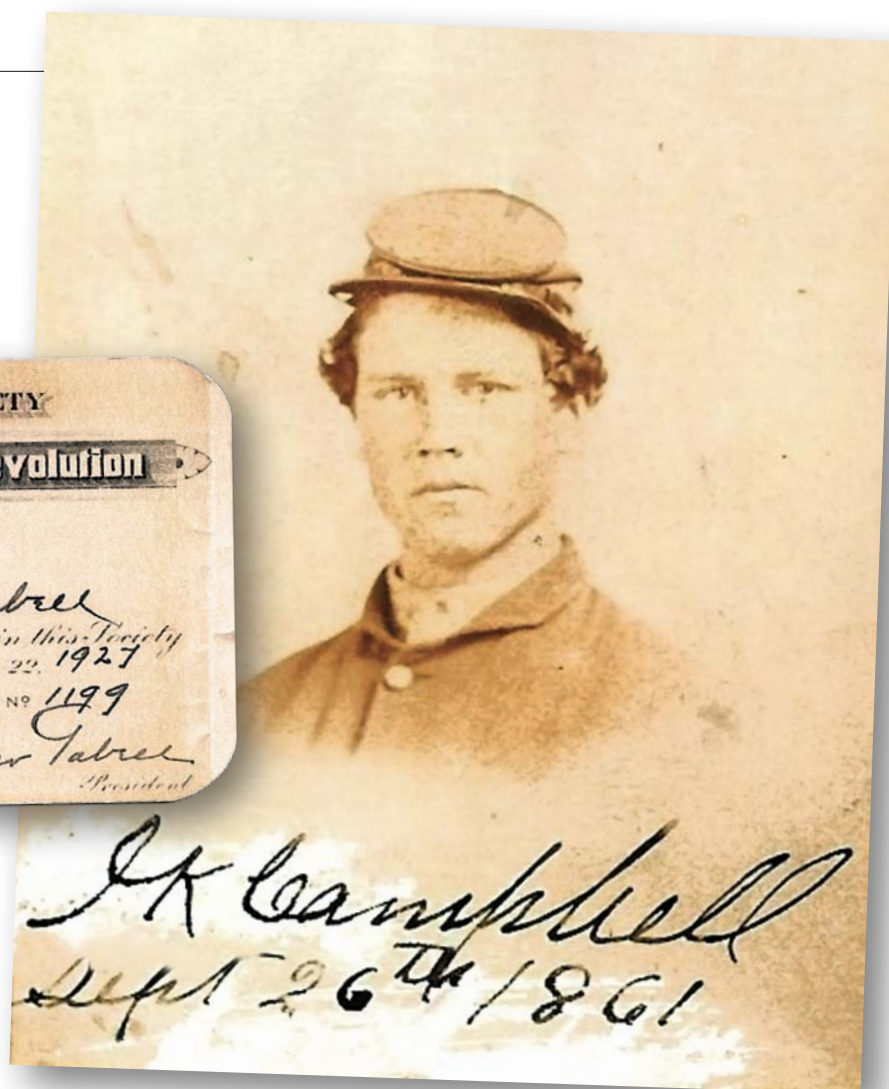
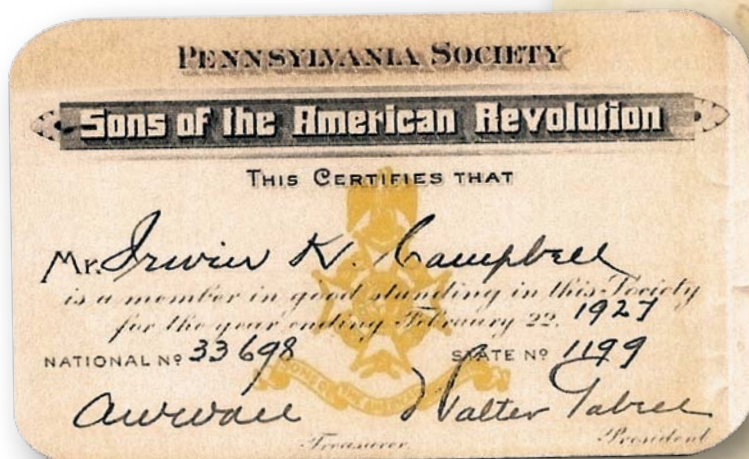
My father, Fred M. Campbell, was a baby (but attended and cried) when I.K.



All photos courtesy Douglas Campbell

dedicated Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall in 1910, and I.K.'s name can be seen on the bronze plaque on the porch of the City-County Building, as he was in office when it was built.





Smithsonian Connection

Joseph E. Fennimore (kneeling, second from left) and fellow soldiers pose with the U.S. flag he made from a captured Nazi flag, a blue dress uniform, and some salvaged red fabric. The group is pictured in Wolfratshausen, Germany, on May 7, 1945, the day Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies.

Fennimore, father of WQED's Chris Fennimore, donated his flag to the Smithsonian in 1986. It will be featured in the History Center's exhibition *Stars & Stripes: An American Story* along with his army uniform jacket and this photograph.

Photograph courtesy of Chris Fennimore.